

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-13 AID-05 ACDA-07 PC-01 /092 W

-----180801Z 075868 /14

R 180700Z JAN 77

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4322

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0041

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJECT: DISSENSION REPORTED WITHIN ETHIOPIAN FORCES IN ERITREA

1. DISSENSION AND DISSAFFECTION ARE REPORTED TO BE SPREADING WITHIN ETHIOPIAN ARMED FORCES FOLLOWING THE ABANDONMENT OF KARORA, THE REPORTED LOSS OF HUMERA AND THE SIGNAL FAILURE OF THE EPMG NACFA RELIEF FORCE. SEVERAL SOURCES HAVE CONFIRMED THAT THE EPMG JOINT NACFA RELIEF FORCE ABANDONED ITS EFFORTS AFTER MOVING ONLY 20 KM. FROM KEREN, AND RETURNED TO THAT CITY DURING THE FIRST WEEK IN JANUARY. THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF THESE SETBACKS HAS BEEN TO AGAIN SPARK A WAVE OF DISSENSION THROUGH EPMG UNITS IN VARIOUS AREAS OF ERITREA.

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2. THE FOCAL POINT OF THIS DISSENSION APPEARS TO BE IN KEREN. ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT, THE RELIEF FORCE WAS ONLY ABLE TO DIS-ENGAGE FROM THE INSURGENTS 20 KM. NNE OF KEREN AFTER PROTRACTED NEGOTIATIONS WITH INSURGENT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BLOCKING FORCE. HAVING BEEN TURNED DOWN ON THEIR DEMAND THAT THE EPMG TROOPS SURRENDER THEIR WEAPONS AS A CONDITION FOR DISENGAGEMENT, THE INSURGENTS AGREED TO PERMIT THE ETHIOPIAN TROOPS TO RETURN

TO KEREN UNHINDERED IF THEY TRAVELLED UNDER A WHITE TRUCE FLAG AND PROMISED NOT TO ENGAGE IN ANY HOSTILITIES DURING THEIR RETREAT.

3. ON RETURNING TO KEREN, THE DISPIRITED FORCES ARE REPORTED TO HAVE HAULED DOWN THE ETHIOPIAN FLAG AND HOISTED THEIR WHITE FLAG. THEY THEN CAUCUSSED AND DECIDED TO DISPATCH SOME 30 REPRESENTATIVES TO THE PMAC IN ADDIS TO PRESENT DEMANDS FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE ERITREAN PROBLEM. THESE 30, WHO FLEW TO ADDIS DIRECTLY, WERE DRAWN FROM BOTH THE RELIEF FORCE AND THE GARRISON IN KEREN, BUT ARE REPORTED TO REPRESENT EPMG GARRISONS THROUGHOUT THE WESTERN LOWLANDS. THE SPONSORS OF THESE 30 HAVE REPORTEDLY THREATENED THAT IF ANY HARM SHOULD COME TO THEIR REPRESENTATIVES, THESE TROOPS WILL REFUSE TO FIGHT FURTHER FOR THE ADDIS GOVERNMENT.

4. THERE ARE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT THERE HAVE BEEN SMALL, ISOLATED DEMONSTRATIONS OF SUPPORT FOR THE KEREN TROOPS INITIATIVE BY EPMG TROOPS IN ASMARA. THIS SUPPORT HAS BEEN IN THE FORM OF TROOPS HALF-MASTING THE EPMG FLAG FOR A BRIEF PERIOD AT SEVERAL MILITARY POSTS, AND IN DRIVING THROUGH THE TOWN DISPLAYING A WHITE FLAG.

5. ON JANUARY 16 REPORTS REACHED ASMARA THAT THE 30 MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES FROM KEREN WERE ARRESTED IN ADDIS AND THAT SOME MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN EXECUTED. TO DATE THERE HAS BEEN NO INDICATION THAT EPMG TROOPS IN THE ASMARA AREA HAVE REACTED TO THESE REPORTS.

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 18-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition Remarks:
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